



Contact: Erny Zah
Director of Communications

Cell: (928) 380-0771

navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov

For Immediate Release
June 8, 2012

President Shelly Applauds Decision to Keep School District Together

MESCALERO, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly applauded a decision to keep Central Consolidated School District intact.

New Mexico Public Education Secretary-designate Hanna Skandera announced that CCSD, which has schools both on and off the reservation, will remain intact after a group of parents advocated for a split of the school district.

Skandera made her announcement Friday afternoon at the annual New Mexico Tribal Leaders Summit.

“Sec. Skandera made a wise decision and I support her decision,” President Shelly said.

About eight months ago, Children First parent group based in Kirtland lobbied for the creation of a new school district and their latest plan would have split the CCSD district at the Navajo reservation boundary. The new school district would still have a student population that would’ve been overwhelmingly majority Navajo.

“We were concerned about our Navajo children that attend schools in Kirtland. Those children are still Navajo. They are still children of this nation and we must do everything we can to ensure they have the opportunity to learn the precious Navajo knowledge handed down from generation to generation. Our children are our most precious possession,” President Shelly added.

Sec. Skandera said her decision to keep the district intact provides an opportunity for the communities to come together.

“This decision was not made lightly or easily. In the end, the most relevant factor is the lesson we teach our students. We need to overcome our differences, not divide ourselves,” Sec. Skandera stated in a press release.

The Navajo Nation weighed in on the dispute during a May hearing when Vice President Rex Lee Jim testified saying the proposed CCSD split would harm Navajo children's ability to learn their culture.

Also, the Navajo Nation Council Naa'bik'iyati' Committee passed a resolution supporting keeping the district intact. Council Delegate Jonathan Hale sponsored that legislation.

Skandera said the communities that compose CCSD need to work together for the best interest of all the district's children.

"We all got to work together," Sec. Skandera said. "I look forward to working with school district and the Navajo Nation."

###